538 popular rhymes. Li Chi's poems are modeled after Shun-t'ien-yu, a folk-song pattern popular in Shansi and Suiyuan during the war against Japan.

All the poets mentioned above are known nationally. Their styles are imitated by lesser known poets. Li Chi's poem Wang Kuei and Li Hsiang-hsiang, which has a North China flavor, seems to be the most popular poem produced under the Communist regime.

E. Popular Rhymes and Folk Songs

538 Folk songs in North China are freer in
533 form than those in South and East China. The popular rhymes, which have been preserved orally for generations, are especially neat and clever in expresion.

The Chinese Communists have always been active in fostering folk songs and popular rhymes which welcome or accept the new political order. The best example is "Tung-fang Hung" ["All Red the East"], a folk song originating in Shensi, and now well-known in North China, which likens Mao Tse-tung to the sun rising in the east. Some of the newer folk songs fostered by the Communists praise construction and eulogize the "new people" under the present regime.

533 Some of the older folk songs are now being rearranged so that the old forms may accom-

533 modate the new ideology. The most notable example is Yüan Chang-ching's rearrangement of "The Water of the Chang River," describing the life of three girls in a North China village and depicting "the betterment of women's lot under the Communist regime."

F. Drama

536

Stage plays in China can be roughly divided into four kinds: (1) folk plays native to small dialectal districts, (2) ching-hsi, or p'i-huang (Peking opera) which is appreciated in all parts of China proper, but particularly in Peking, Tientsin, and Shanghai, and in big cities of other regions, (3) the new opera, a genre created by the Chinese Communists, and (4) the modern play. These together with motion pictures, are now utilized by the Communists to disseminate ideological and political messages.

1. The folk plays.

Pang-tzu is the most prevalent of all folk plays in North China. It can be found in nearly all the counties along the shores of the Yellow River. It is so called because the rhythms of its music are marked by the beats of a foot-long wooden stick which in North China is called pang-tzu.

P'ing-chü, also called peng-peng-hsi,

1:Stanford U. S-4, 5 1956 AF12 North China AF12

535 Tibetans in Southwest China, "Please Stay, You Guests from Afar" of the Yi people, and the "Peacock Dance" of the Tai (Thai) people.[26]

The Central Experimental Opera Institute at Peking has also given instruction in ballet, and there are many aspiring bellerinas. Interest in ballet is unprecedented in China and is clearly the result of the popularity of ballet in Russia.[27]

The activities associated with dance are organized and directed by the government. There is the All-China Association of Dancers, which is a subdivision of the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Workers,[28] with headquarters in Peking. Tai Ai-lien, a well-known professional dancer, heads the association. She has dedicated herself to the incorporation of folk life, especially that of the minority peoples, into her dances. Her training, however, is Western.

F. Music

177 533 Appreciation of Western classical music has been revived in accordance with the principle of "accepting the culture of the world."

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26. Ibid., July 1954.

27. Ibid., May 1954.

28. The All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles was changed to the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Workers in September 1953.

[177] A municipal symphony orchestra in Peking performs Beethoven as well as Tschaikowsky
533 and is intended to set an example for musical activities elsewhere in the nation. The quality of the symphony's performance is unknown. No major composer has emerged under the Communist regime. Most of the musicians seem to be absorbed in collecting and re-arranging folk music, in composing scores for the new operas, or in turning out at short notice musical accompaniment for propaganda films.

Marching bands have been very popular under the Communist regime; nearly every school has a band. This is in keeping with the Communists' deliberate effort to foster some kind of martial spirit in the youth.

208 536 formers, and promoted the formation of new troupes, both professional and amateur.

In order to link the presentation of operas with tasks of "national reconstruction," the Ministry of Cultural Affairs issued a directive on December 27, 1952 calling upon all professional opera teams to draw up semi-annual or quarterly schedules of performances and to submit these schedules for approval by the local authorities in charge of cultural affairs.[17] Upon issuance of this directive, the Communist regime acquired the instrument of power by which could be determined not only what operas might be presented by the opera teams but when these operas should be presented.

533 208 535 Before turning our attention from the stage, the manner in which Communists use

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17. "Chung-yang Wen-hua Pu Kuan-yü Cheng-tun Ho Chia-ch'iang Ch'üan-kuo Chü-t'uan Kung-tso Ti Chih-shih" ["Directive of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of the Central People's Government Concerning the Readjustment and Strengthening of the Work of Opera Teams in the Nation"], People's Daily, Dec. 27, 1952.

208 spoken drama, music, folk songs, and folk
533 dancing for purposes of propaganda should be
535 mentioned. These devices, nominally planned for amusement or relaxation, are now permeated with Communist ideas and symbols. As well as the professional dramatic groups, ballad teams, and symphony orchestras in Peking and Tientsin, there are many government-organized "cultural and artistic troupes", consisting of thousands of dramatists, dancers, musicians, and singers. These troupes travel everywhere, performing in villages, mining districts, and industrial plants. Programs presented by these troupes are usually designed to enlist popular support for certain current policies of the regime.

J. Motion Pictures as a Medium for Propaganda

208 The Chinese Communists recognized
546 motion pictures as a powerful weapon of propaganda long before the North China Region came under their control. But their utilization of motion pictures as a propaganda medium did not begin until they captured Peking and Tientsin in 1949. The Communists took immediate measures to prohibit the showing of films with ideological content contradictory to the spirit and provisions of the "Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference" -- a document containing the basic policies of the regime. Meanwhile, they assumed

2: Gamble S-5 (1926-1933)1954 AF12 North China AF12

PART 5. SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER XVI

Yang Ke and Other Recreation

533 536 543 LOCAL TRADITION says that the poet Su Tung-p'o (1036–1101), when he was the magistrate in Ting Hsien, wrote songs for the farmers to sing while they were planting the rice fields watered by the Black and White Dragon Springs, in the northwest part of the hsien. The Chinese name for these songs is yang ke, green sprout or planting songs.

Local tradition does not say, nor does the memory of the oldest inhabitant recall, by what stages the yang ke moved from the rice fields onto the local stage, by what metamorphosis the original simple group songs became plays, with the dialogue generally sung and accompanied by music, nor how the singers changed from blue clad farmers into actors in costume performing for the pleasure and amusement of the people.

Nor does local tradition have an answer for another question: Why are the Ting Hsien yang ke different from those in other parts of the country? In some places they have kept their original character of simple folk songs. The Shanghai yang ke were street dances. In Peking the term was applied to the parade through the streets of actors on three or four foot stilts. There the chief actor, taking the part of a monk, led the procession and cleared a way through the crowd by swinging a long stick in front of him. The other characters were usually a regular fairly standardized group, a bearded man, a woman, a grandmother, a young man, a butterfly girl, a painted face, a stupid boy and his wife, military and civil attendants. The group sang short songs, played on the drums and gongs, made jokes and humorous remarks, and amused the crowd by their actions. In Shantung the yang ke stilt walkers used to be part of the entertainment at the temple fairs.

536 533 In the Experimental District we found five groups of yang ke players. On a proportional basis, this would indicate a total of some 36 groups

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2: Gamble S-5 (1926-1933) 1954 AF12 North China AF12

536 533 in the hsien. Usually there were 15 or 16 men in a group. This number would include actors, musicians, make up and property men. Most of them were farmers during the growing season and gave the yang ke as amateurs or semi-amateurs for special village celebrations or in connection with the temple fairs. A few of the better actors apparently were paid a salary for their yang ke work. Some of the actors took boys as apprentices and taught them the singing and acting. There evidently was no fixed term for such an apprenticeship. The principal requirement for the boy was that he should be smart, have a good memory, and possess a reasonably good voice. As most of the yang ke players were illiterate, the roles were memorized and handed on from one actor to another. Female parts were all played by men. The costumes were of the type often used in the Chinese theater, but generally were not very elaborate.

536 527 545 New Year's time, especially at the time of the Lantern Festival, the spring and autumn festivals, the temple fairs, and after the harvest were the times when the yang ke were given. If the village had no permanent stage a temporary one was easily and cheaply erected. Sometimes a mat shed, costing about $15, was added to cover the audience, most of whom stood in the open space in front of the stage. No seats were provided, though sometimes carts would be ranked along the side of the mat shed to provide an advantageous position for some of the women spectators.

If the troupe were acting in its own village the cost of the plays was about $10 per day. This would cover the food for the actors and other incidentals. If they were playing in another village they were paid somewhat more. The money to pay for the yang ke was generally raised by assessing the entire village, usually according to the amount of farm land owned. As the plays were generally given for three or four days, sometimes for as long as 10 days, the actors needed a large repertoire.

536 533 Working with the yang ke groups in the Experimental District we were able to record, perhaps for the first time, the texts of 48 plays. These have been published as part of our Chinese report. At the end of the chapter we give the complete dialogue of four plays and the stories of seven more, as samples of the different kinds of plays.

One of the yang ke players was persuaded to make records of the singing of some of the characters in the plays. Samples of four different parts have been transcribed to give an idea of the tunes and tempos.

2: Gamble S-5 (1926-1933)1954 AF12 North China AF12

Ting Hsien Yang Ke

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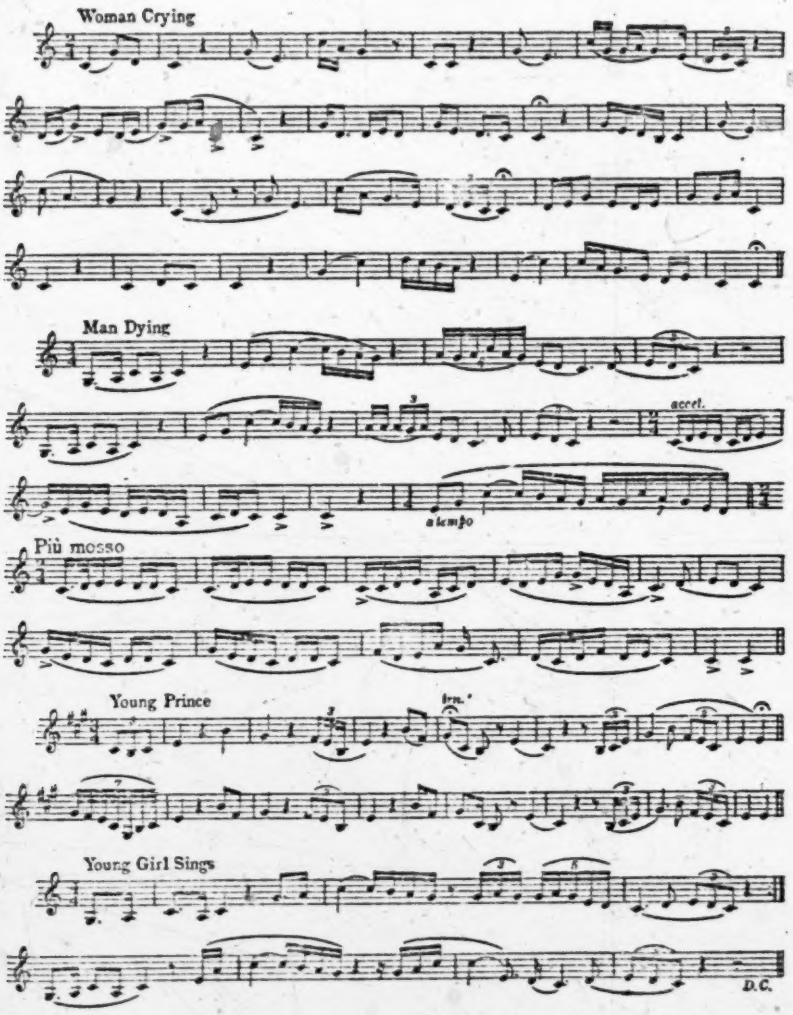
2: Gamble S-5 (1926-1933) 1954 AF12 North China AF12

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It must be remembered that they are sung in the falsetto voice regularly used in Chinese singing.

The stories of the plays can be generally divided into six different types. 1. Boy and girl. 2. Filial piety and chastity. 3. Husband and wife. 4. Mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. 5. Humorous. 6. Miscellaneous. Our 48 plays were divided boy and girl 11, filial piety and chastity 13, husband and wife 5, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law 4, humorous 6, and miscellaneous 9. The field reports did not say whether these 48 plays represented the entire repertoire of one group of players or whether they were in the repertoire of all the groups.

You do not have two saddles for a good horse; a good woman does not have two husbands; marriage is forever. This philosophy generally prevails in the boy and girl yang ke, but there are some with stories of romantic attachment and elopement. The plays show that the women like to marry men who are students, who will be scholars and can become officials.

Chinese life emphasizes filial piety as a primary obligation. Children must sacrifice themselves and the lives of their children to protect their parents. A filial daughter will sacrifice her honor, if necessary, to get an opportunity to avenge the death of her parents. True filial piety can move heaven and earth, God and the devil. One of the major sins against filial piety is to have no sons to carry on the family line and offer sacrifices to the spirits of the ancestors.

Between husband and wife, the husband is the master. His wife is his property and slave. He can send her away if she has no son, but she cannot leave of her own volition. If she is dismissed her loss of face will prevent her returning to her home, so she will rather persuade her husband to let her stay while he takes a concubine in order to have a son, or she will become a nun. In some cases the wife may be sent away, not by the wish of her husband, but at the order of her mother-in-law. The son sacrifices his wife rather than be unfilial. Some plays show the husband having the power to sell his wife.

When a girl marries she leaves her own family and becomes a member of her husband's family. His mother has complete power over her daughter-in-law. The daughter-in-law must listen to and submit to her mother-in-law, even before her husband. A daughter-in-law cannot have any freedom or any ideas of her own while her mother-in-law lives. The mother-in-law is inclined never to allow her daughter-in-law to do any-

2: Gamble S-5 (1926-1933)1954 AF12 North China AF12

thing that she has never done or to enjoy anything she has never enjoyed. As a result a daughter-in-law is generally depicted as hoping that her mother-in-law will die very soon so that she may be mistress of the house. And she wants to treat her daughter-in-law in the same way that she has been treated.

When spirits take on human form and carry on work and romance, when a wife browbeats her husband and forces him to kneel with a brick or a lamp on his head as punishment for gambling, when a donkey driver and his woman passenger discuss affairs, the actors have an opportunity to insert plenty of slap-stick humor and broad jokes.

The miscellaneous group of yang ke included stories about Ting Hsien and stories borrowed from the regular Chinese stage.

The old people said that in the old days the yang ke were much more refined than they were when we studied them, that during the preceding 25 years the tunes, words, and acting had gradually become rougher and more boisterous and more and more popular. In fact, the year before our study the District Bureau of Education tried to suppress the plays on the grounds that they were a social and moral menace, but it could not enforce its prohibition.

Our investigators reported that while there was some vulgarity and considerable sex in the yang ke it was the sort to tickle the crowd and the plays were not, in their opinion, a harmful influence. The opposition to the plays apparently came from the old-fashioned people and the traditional attitudes of the countryside, where even a man and a woman shaking hands was considered to have a sex implication and where it was unheard of for a father to kiss his daughter in public.

The yang ke were very popular and had a large place in the recreational life of Ting Hsien. They were a people's literature, developed by local groups. Traditional stories had been subject to local editing and changes. They were simple enough for all to understand, but with literary quality. They pictured life in the country or life as the country people would like to have it. Life as depicted on the stage represented high society for many of the villagers. Love making on the stage was certainly an emotional release for the crowd.

The yang ke tunes were the popular music of the countryside. They were learned by young and old. We often heard them being sung at night by a belated villager walking through the fields. He would be

2: Gamble S-5 (1926-1933) 1954 AF12 North China AF12

536 533 singing for his own pleasure and to scare away any wandering spirits that might be about.

The reports spoke especially of the large numbers of women and girls who attended the yang ke plays. They were one of the big recreational events of the year and all the community made the most of them.

545 369 533 Theatrical performances were also given by troupes of professional actors engaged by some villages and by city organizations, such as the Lantern Association of the West Street, to give plays at New Year's time, for the temple fairs, and for other special occasions. The engagements were usually for a three or four day series of plays. The cost of this entertainment was about $130. The details of the expenditure are given in our report on the Temple Fairs in Chapter XVIII. The expenses of the plays given in the villages were usually paid by all the people in the village, generally by special graduated subscriptions rather than from general village funds. In some instances the amount of a family's subscription was determined by the amount of land the family held. In others the amount asked of each family was arbitrarily fixed, but it usually had some relation to the family's economic status. The subscription was practically obligatory, but we were told of some instances where families had refused to contribute. The collector threatened them with bodily harm if any member of the family went to the plays. In the city the cost was met by the members of the organization promoting the plays.

The spectators were not limited to the inhabitants of the village giving the plays, but came from the surrounding villages as well. It was an occasion for much local visiting and entertaining.

536 776 782 Worship of the gods was closely connected with most if not all of the plays given in 1929. A possible exception was those given for the Tung T'ing fairs, as it was reported that those fairs had no temple connection. If the stage was not set up in or near a temple courtyard where there was an altar, a shrine usually was built opposite the stage so that the gods might be worshiped and know that the plays were given as an offering to them. The people attending the plays combined worship and recreation. Theatrical plays were often given, as a special offering, when the community was seeking help from the gods, asking for rain, or wanting protection from locusts or other pests and disasters. The plays given at the temple fairs were naturally related to the temple worship.

2: Gamble S-5 (1926-1933)1955 AF12 North China AF12

the entertainment until about midnight. If the weather was clear the full moon added its light to that of the lanterns. 545

The Warrior Show was given from ten in the morning until six in the evening on the 15th of the first moon. Some 70 or 80 players took part, showing their prowess, agility, and muscular control with different kinds of weapons, spears, lances, tridents, knives, swords, daggers, and staves. Some were individual performances. Others were done in groups of two, three, or four. The latter showed very careful timing and much practice as in many instances the tempo was very fast and the weapons and dancers had to be at just the right place to avoid injury. Some of the individual posturing and muscle control is often called "Chinese boxing" by foreigners. 545 535

A flying star, a piece of iron tied to the end of a rope, was used to clear the spectators from the space the company needed for its show. 545

On the 14th of the first month the head of the Lion Society went from house to house and presented a red New Year's card that announced that the Lions would be entertaining the public on that day. It also probably intimated that a contribution would be greatly appreciated. The activities of the entertaining groups were regularly supported by contributions.

The beating of a drum and gong advertised the beginning of the show. It started with a group of clowns bringing out a wheelbarrow on which sat a man dressed in an old mandarin's robe and hat with black rings painted around his eyes. The wheelbarrow was pushed by a clown dressed as an old man and pulled by one dressed as an old woman.

Then came a boat made of willow twigs decorated with bright cloth. The passengers were a man dressed as a woman and one dressed as a sailor. The motion of the boat kept time with the drum and gong.

When the "boat" finished its voyage two "lions", one green, one red, came out to entertain the crowd with their capers and dances. Each had an embroidered ball with which it played. A man, with a club in his hand, played the part of the lion tamer and danced between the two lions. The show lasted for about an hour, after which the players were invited to go to the home of a well-to-do family for rest and refreshment.

The lion heads were bamboo frames covered with brightly decorated paper. Sometimes the lions were a one man variety, sometimes a two man species with the second man the hind legs and tail.

During the winter days, when there was little work on the farms, 533 535

2: Gamble S-5 (1926-1933) 1954 AF12 North China AF12

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LOTUS LANTERN

533 groups of men got together to make music with drums, gongs, and cym-
535 bals. The drummer stood in the center of the circle and set the tempo. The others followed his lead. As variations to the clashing of the cymbals and the ringing of the gongs, some groups added the posturing and gestures of Chinese "boxing", all done without interrupting the playing of the instruments.

526 Ice on the ditches and streams made skating possible for those who could fasten an iron bar to their shoes, but metal was usually so scarce that sliding had to be the way most of the young people used the ice.

Kicking the shuttlecock was a game that was popular with the boys and young men during the winter. The shuttlecock was made from chicken feathers and a flat round piece of metal. In earlier days the

4: Burgess E-4, 5 (1926-1927) 1928 AF12 North China AF12

Mr. S. D. Gamble. This meeting must not be taken as typical of guild meetings in the city of Peking. The organization and regulations of the Blind Guild are, according to our study, the most complicated and detailed of any guild in the city. The general outline, however, shows the character of the business transacted at one of these annual meetings. 417* 732

The Gild of the Blind, who make a business of singing, story telling and entertaining, holds its meetings on the 2nd of the 3rd month and the 8th of the 9th month, celebrating the Chinese festivals of the 3rd of the 3rd moon and the 9th of the 9th moon, as the meeting lasts until 5 o'clock the next morning. It was our good fortune to be given the privilege of attending one of these meetings. As the gild has no gild hall, it borrows the *Ching Chung Miao*, a temple in the South City, outside of Hatamen, and there, all day long, a constant stream of blind men was coming and going. They were greeting their friends, discussing politics and the conditions of business, and enjoying the tea and cakes that had been provided; and it was a strange sight to see so many blind people together, each with his long bamboo cane, tapping, tapping, tapping, as they moved around the hall. They were constantly calling back and forth across the hall as the men tried to locate their friends; and, when a group wanted to move from one part of the hall to another, they formed a line, each with his hand on the shoulder of the man in front of him, and were led by a man who still had a little vision and so could avoid chairs and tables. A very few women came to the meeting; they visited among themselves or listened to the business being transacted, but did not mingle with the men. [533 • 538]

In the evening the executive council of forty-eight met to conduct the business of the gild. They gathered around a row of tables arranged in the shape of a tortoise shell. The twenty-four men on each side of the table all had different titles and duties as follows.

4: Burgess E-4, 5 (1926-1927) 1928 AF12 North China AF12

times, and then the next pair was brought up. All the time the worship was going on, music was furnished by six of the best musicians of the gild. 467* 732 782

After all forty-eight of the officers had worshiped before the gods, the musicians gave a two-hour concert with their best songs and music. Any who had written new songs during the past year were called upon to give them at the time. Following the concert, the business meeting was held from 12 to 2. It consisted of reports and the discussion of methods for strengthening the gild, and of ways and means for making the business of the blind entertainers more prosperous. At the end of the meeting, a report giving a statement of the condition of the gild, a résumé of the business of the past year, and the names of all the officers, musicians, committeemen and subscribers, was burned on the altar, so that the gods might have a complete report of the work and development of the gild. [533]

After the business meeting, the committee constituted itself a court, tried the cases of those who were accused of having broken the rules and regulations of the gild, and heard and attempted to settle cases where there had been a quarrel or dispute between any of the members. When the cases were brought before the court testimony was taken and a verdict rendered. Each of the members of the executive committee carried out the duties of the office to which he had been assigned.. 467* 732 627

In the olden days, the gilds used to punish their younger members, when convicted of violating the important rules of the association, by sentencing them to 50, 70 or 100 strokes of the bamboo, according to the degree of their guilt. As the gild felt that no man could completely break a rule, the entire sentence was never carried out. If a man were sentenced to 100 blows, the executioner would give only 90. The older members were punished by a fine. Those convicted of a first degree offense were fined one tael ($1.39). For a second degree offense, the fine was seven mace (7/10 of a tael [$.97]) and for one of the third degree, three mace (3/10 of a tael [$.42]).

After the establishment of the Republic, the people denied the gild the right to use the bamboo and insisted that other punish-